REMARKS

Claims 1-18 and 21-23 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2 and 18 have been amended and claims 19 and 20 have been canceled without prejudice. The amendments to claim 1 are supported by at least page 17, lines 3-6 of Applicant's specification. Claims 21-23 have been added by this Amendment. Claims 4-18 have been withdrawn due to a previous restriction requirement.

Claims 1-3 and 21-23 continue to read on the elected group. Rejoinder is requested for amended claim 18 when independent claim 1 is allowed.

Claims 2, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 2 has been amended responsive to this rejection and claims 19 and 20 have been canceled. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Oshita (JP-A-2001-237073) in view of Sakai (JP-A-2000-012613). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 calls for spacers which are sufficiently rigid not to deform when pressed so as to hold said substrate and said mask member with a predetermined gap between them. The combination of Oshita and Sakai fails to suggest these features because Sakai's particles 3a/3b deform when pressed.

Oshita discloses a substrate (base material section 43) and a mask member (42) which are joined together by a tape (paragraph [0012] of translation and Drawing 2). Page 3 of the Office Action admits that Oshita fails to disclose the spacers of claim 1, and relies on Sakai to suggest this feature.

Sakai discloses a method of mounting electronic parts. In Fig. 2(a) of Sakai, a bump 5 is bonded to the electrode 2 through the conductive adhesive 3 which contains conductive particles 3a (alleged spacer). At this time, the conductive particles 3a are broken into smaller

conductive particles 3b by pressing the electronic part 4 (Figs. 2(b)-2(c)). As shown in Fig. 2(c), the brittle particles 3b in adhesive layer 3 would continue to deform if they were further pressed because the purpose of the mounting method in Sakai is to increase the conductivity of the adhesive layer 3. This purpose is achieved by increasing the number of electrical contact points/conductive particles 3a/3b or, in other words, breaking the brittle particles 3a into smaller brittle particles 3b.

This process is further explained in Sakai by stating, "At this time, the conductive particles 3a are broken into smaller particles 3b by pressing the electronic part 4. As a result the number of contact points between the conductive particles 3a and the electrode 2 and the between the particles and the bump 5 can be increased, and the gap between the electrode and the bump 5 is reduced..." [Emphasis Added][Abstract]. Further, in paragraph [0011], Sakai states, "Subsequently, if the electronic parts 4 are pressed to the substrate 1 as shown in drawing 2(b), since the electric conduction particle 3a is a thing which consists of carbon which is a brittle material and which is easy to be destroyed, a press load will break easily and it will be divided in two or more particles." Sakai does not want to make a distance constant because Sakai does not want brittle particles 3a/3b that are sufficiently rigid not to deform when pressed as required by amended claim 1 of the present application.

Further, with regard to the prior art, one skilled in the art would not look to Sakai in view of Oshita because they are directed to different fields of invention. Oshita is directed towards manufacturing a mask. On the other hand, Sakai is directed towards a method using a conductive adhesive to mount electronic components which is unrelated to mask manufacture. Therefore, one skilled in the art would not look to Sakai in view of Oshita to manufacture the mask as described in amended claim 1 as the invention in Sakai is unrelated to methods of manufacturing masks.

Accordingly, Oshita, Sakai, and combinations thereof, do not disclose or suggest: "a mask, comprising: ... spacers which are sufficiently rigid not to deform when pressed so as to hold said substrate and said mask member with a predetermined gap between them." [Emphasis added.] As discussed in the above remarks, Oshita and Sakai, even if combined, fail to disclose spacers which are sufficiently rigid not to deform when pressed.

Additionally, dependent claims 2 and 3 and new claims 21-23 are patentable for at least their various dependencies from independent claim 1, in addition to the additional features they recite.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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